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ABSTRACT

The Prototype Schools Prcject endeavored to design and disseminate an inservice program to expedite and facilitate desegregatich in the Houston Independent School District. A ratio cf 35 percent Negro to 65 percent white teachers was accomplished, cr vice versa, as the individual school situation indicated. The six pilot schools in the program were increased to twelve, and then tc eighteen fcr special sensitivity training workshops under the auspices cf the University of Texas. Evaluations provided insight and recommendatichs fcr a continuatich of the project. [Because of the quality of the print, a map of the Houston Independent School District (page 3) will not reproduce clearly in hard copy.] (Author/DM)

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HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

PROTOTYPE SCHOOLS PROJECT
No. OEG-7-9-537006-0107-(036)

Final Technical Report

Submitted under Title IV,
Section 405 of Public Law 88-352,
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January 30, 1970

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Prototype Schools Project of the Houston Independent School District endeavored during the past operational period to plant and germinate an inservice program designed to provide sensitively trained administrators, teachers, parents, and community leaders whose activities will achieve the objective of expediting and facilitating desegregation within the Houston Independent School District from the status of two separate,racially self-isolating faculties or student bodies under the roof of a single school to the positive and enduring status of true integration. The objectives were these:

To implement further the process currently underway within the Houston Independent School District, and to which the Houston Independent School District is positively committed; *to eliminate totally the dual school system* within the Houston Independent School District through the addition to this process of the vital component defined in this proposal: The inservice education of a nucleus or cadre of sensitively trained administrators, teachers, parents, and community leaders whose activities will significantly contribute to the achievement of the objective of accelerating *desegregation* within the Houston Independent School District from the status of two separate, racially self-isolating faculties and student bodies housed under the roof of a single school to the positive and enduring status of true *integration – where all participants in any given school work cooperatively as one educational community committed to a common educational goal* – and concurrently supported by their total community in these efforts.

To design a *Prototype Schools Project,* as a pilot activity, to be tested, evaluated, revised, and/or replanned during the twelve months of this project period, in six schools in the Houston Independent School District in which the faculties were totally desegregated for the first time during the spring semester of 1969 in order to determine the most feasible, acceptable, economic, efficient, and effective means of meaningfully implementing this districtwide process of workable integration.

To implement this *Prototype Schools Project* throughout the Houston Independent School District by the placement of a cadre of "internal change agents" to develop intensive inservice training programs, after the completion of their own year of inservice integration training.

The Program involved six pilot schools in the district in which the faculties were to be totally desegregated for the first time during the past school year 1968--69.

As the planting of hybrid seed in virgin soil yields bountifully, the Prototype Schools Project was successful in planting and implementing a process for the accomplishment of racially balanced faculties within six Prototype Schools; reaching a racially balanced ratio of 35% Negro-American teachers to 65% Anglo-American teachers or vice versa, as the individual school situation directed.

Realizing the impact of the Prototype Schools Project upon the district in future integration programs through the training of a cadre of "internal change agents," the staff recommended that the pilot program be expanded to an additional six schools and then in April to a total of eighteen schools. These recommendations were approved and the faculty members from the eighteen Prototype Schools, six secondary level schools and twelve elementary level schools, were brought together for special sensitivity training workshops conducted under the auspices of the Texas Educational Desegregation Technical Assistance Center of the University of Texas.

Among the participants were administrators, teachers, counselors, custodians, clerks, and secretaries. All were encouraged to participate in the series of sensitivity training workshops to bring about the understanding and the favorable acceptance of the philosophy of the program which stresses that an "integrated education is not the mere mixing together of children from different backgrounds. For mixing to have educational value, it must be reinforced by the attitudes and the behavior of school teachers and administrators, the content of the curriculum and textbooks, the experience of the children outside the classroom such that an opportunity is available for every child to develop his potential."[1] Thus, within the Prototype Schools the concept was paramount that desegregation is not merely the process of eliminating the high concentration of Negro children in a few schools, *but rather that total integration must begin with and be demonstrated by the teacher.*

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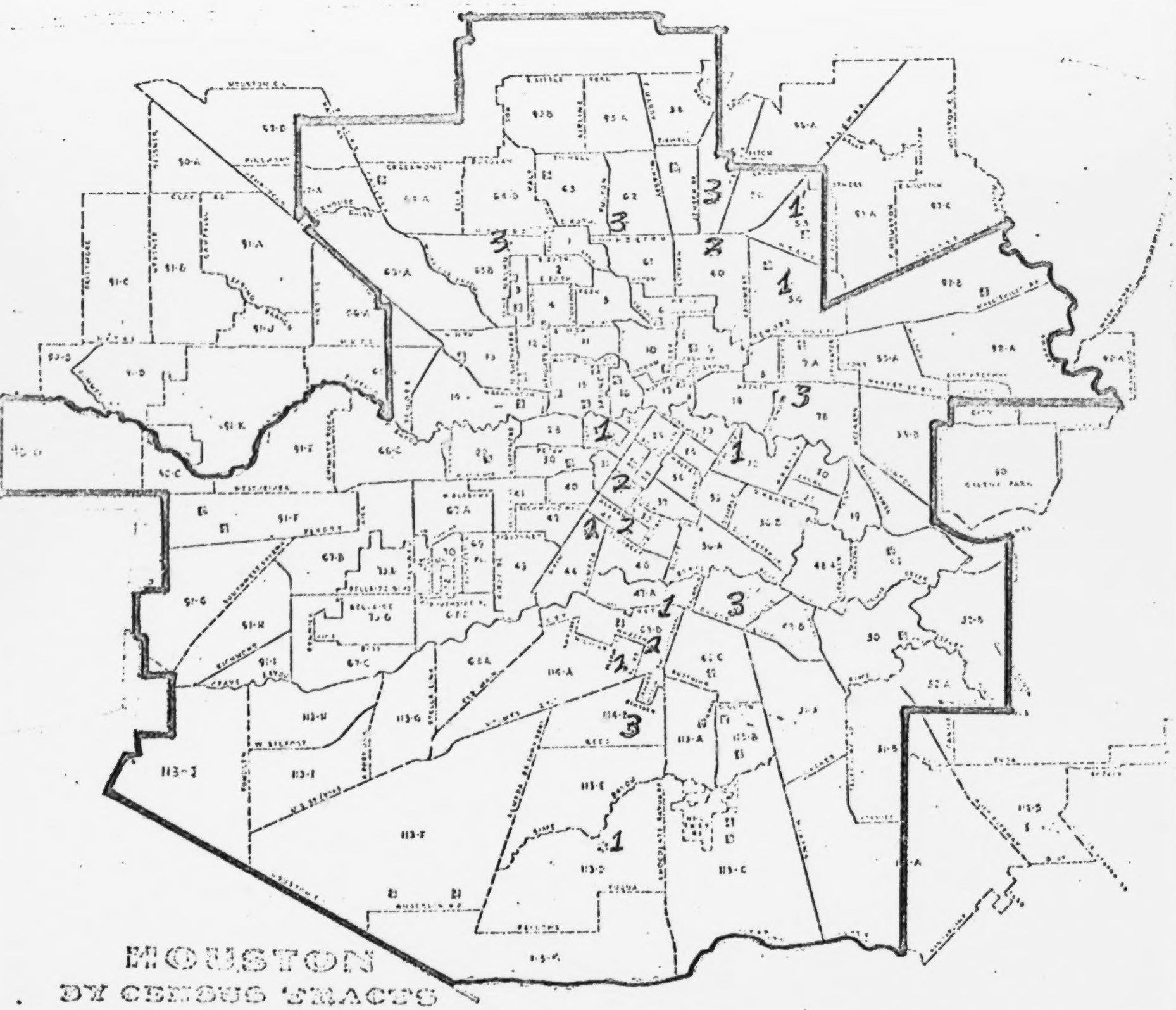
[1] *Prototype Schools Project,* Houston Independent School District Proposal for School Board Grant Program on School Desegregation Problems, Houston, Texas, November, 1968.

The following map of the Houston Independent School District indicates both elementary and secondary schools which are designated as Prototype.

No. 1 – 1st six schools
No. 2 – 2nd six schools
No. 3 – 3rd six schools



HOUSTON
BY CENSUS TRACTS
HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Prototype Schools Project training sessions involved the complete spectrum of school personnel from assistant superintendents to the custodians. During the operational period, the following training sessions were conducted:

August 26–30, 1968,(local funds for planning) 23 professional employees from prospective Prototype Schools attended sensitivity training sessions conducted by Dr. Francis Trusty and Mr. Frank Yeager from the University of Tennessee.

March, 1969,a total number of 80 participants attended sensitivity training seminars for faculty members of the six schools originally designated as Prototype schools.

May, 1969, a second sensitivity training seminar was conducted for teachers from an additional six schools designated as members of the Prototype Schools Project. According to the proposal, the faculties of these six additional schools were not to be trained until 1971; however, this was expedited and these additional schools with a total of 180 faculty members participated in this seminar during the fall semester of 1969.

October and November, 1969, a series of sensitivity training sessions was conducted for the third group of teachers from schools added to the Prototype Schools Project and all teachers who had been assigned to the previously trained faculties of Prototype Schools. Participating in this series of sessions were 276 teachers.

In December, 1969, a special group leader training seminar was established and conducted for members of Prototype School faculties who were selected by their principals as teachers demonstrating the best ability to work with students and faculty members of a different ethnic background. Special training was given to approximately 40 teachers to serve as group leaders for future seminar training sessions. During the twelve month period of this project, a total of 576 professional employees participated in the sensitivity training programs.

The project staff also endeavored to determine the most feasible, acceptable, economic, efficient, and effective means of implementing a districtwide process of workable integration.

The Prototype Schools staff trained a selected group of teachers to serve as resource-consultant group leaders to assist the staff in the dissemination of the philosophy of the project and to serve as leaders in interpersonal and intergroup contact at future workshops.

The training program objectives were as follows:

a. To develop a team approach and a mutual understanding between members of a racially mixed faculty.

b. To provide an understanding of the basic ethnic background of the student body and faculty in wl ich the crossover teacher is to be involved.

c. To develop teacher insight into prejudice and to provide teachers with the techniques for bridging the prejudice gap.

d. To impart information to the crossover teacher concerning problems of communication with racially mixed groups in the classroom and the skills for improving communication.

e. To develop teacher understanding and sensitivity toward the problems of stress among racially mixed groups of pupils and the methods applicable for dealing with student-teacher stress.

f. To provide a base from which the teacher might understand and utilize the techniques for motivating racially mixed groups of pupils to aspire toward an improved educational level.

g. To develop teacher insights into the games pupils play and the counter-games teachers play when trying to cope with the problems incident to integration.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

The activities carried out by the Prototype Schools Project have clearly revealed that the assumptions made in the early design of the project were valid, but no environment, no community, or no school district remains in a condition of status quo. The Houston Independent School District also faced changes. The problem description of this school district is like that of many other large schools systems across the nation. It has urban problems, mass transportation problems, a fluctuating tax base, and difficulty in accommodating the educational needs of each of the 235,372 students within its boundaries, as well as orienting its teachers to the contemporary problems of our society. Unique among cities, the Houston Independent School District must serve a metropolitan area of 446 square miles, the sixth largest school district in the nation, with a school complex composed of 224 school campuses, and employing more than 15,000 administrators, teachers, and other school personnel.

In addition, the school district has faced the nearly insurmountable task of moving toward acceptable compliance with court orders, educating the community (which is somewhat inflexible in its conservatism) to the need for an integrated system. Working within a metropolitan area surrounded by more than nineteen other independent school districts, operating under "The Freedom-of-Choice Plan," functioning under a court order to desegregate one year at a time, the Houston district has progressively demonstrated its willingness to eliminate a dual system, to implement desegregation and to integrate its schools. This was evidenced by actions of the Board of Education when it initiated "The Freedom-of-Choice Plan." Using this plan, "the Houston School Board abolished individual school boundaries and announced that any child was eligible to attend any school within the school district. This action increased the rate of integration in those schools which had been desegregated, but it also increased residential transition. The high mobility of Anglo families out of transition neighborhoods tended to resegregate previously integrated schools. Cullen Junior High School, for example, had an enrollment of 984 Negroes in 1966–67; but in 1967–68, 1261 Negroes, out of a membership of 1374, were enrolled. Thus, the Cullen Junior High School changed from an all white junior high in 1964–65 to become approximately all Negro (1261 of 1374) in 1967–68. The same process of change occurred in other schools." [2]

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[2] Noland, James R., J. Robinson, Jr., and E. Martin, *School Desegregation in the State of Texas and The City of Houston,* February, 1969.

Due to family mobility within the district in 1969, at the beginning of the Prototype Schools Project, 37,493 of the 81,481 Negro children in the district attended integrated schools. As of September, 1969 the number of Negroes in desegregated schools numbered 19,536 in formerly all white schools and 13,820 in previously desegregated schools, an indication of the rapidity with which families tend to become mobile.

Faculty desegregation which had begun very hesitantly began to proceed at a faster rate with the majority of schools now having two or more crossover teachers. The Prototype Schools Project provided opportunity for many of these teachers to receive sensitivity training when confronted with the experiences of on-the-job teaching in an integrated faculty without previous orientation.

The school district faces other problems because of a recent edict issued by the court: to comply with the desegregation plan established on August 12, 1960, to desegregate one year at a time, and to discontinue the use of "The Freedom-of-Choice Plan," which has been declared to be a failure. Judge Ben C. Connally has been asked to order wide range changes which would require the district to: (1) formulate and adopt new provisions for student assignments in the Houston School District and rather than to continue the 1967 "The Freedom-of-Choice Plan" to implement the pairing of schools in geographical zoning in accordance with the alternative plans suggested; and (2) assign Anglo and Negro teachers predominantly in each school until racially identifiable schools are eliminated.

EVALUATION

The assumption is made that when hybrid seed is planted and cultivated in virgin soil the harvest will be plentiful. The same was true when the Prototype Schools Project was initiated. Therefore, to prove or disprove this assumption a series of evaluations was made during the year. These included: (1) a personal evaluation of each workshop by each participant (2) a follow-up evaluation, within a six months' period following the workshop and (3) periodic visits to the schools to determine how effective attitudinal and behavioral changes were with teachers and principals.

The following summary of comments from these evaluations provides insight into the extensiveness of harvest and forms the basis upon which the Prototype Schools staff modified operations and upon which recommendations for a continuation of the project for a second operational period are founded:

. . . Sensitivity workshop was well worth the time spent. Feel it will be easier to do a better job.

. . . These seminars are a *must before* each school year begins and should be continued through the entire school year.

. . . The more interaction between members of integrated faculty, the better. We must learn to communicate.

. . . This was a very worthwhile seminar. There should be more, not only of this type, but in each individual school.

. . . More administrators should be brought into these seminars.

. . . This program should be made *mandatory* for every teacher, administrator in the Houston Independent School District, including all personnel. It was very informative and became another challenge for me, in the hope that I can successfully work in my school.

. . . I think that more understanding has transpired as a result of this seminar. I feel that many grew emotionally who might not otherwise have had the opportunity.

. . . Problems presented were superficial – not pertinent to present situation. This is a cultural difference – why wasn't it brought out more? Also, we need this *type* of program in August, not April.

. . . We have just scratched the surface and should continue. The small group discussions were of particular interest – we need more of these to become more "self aware" and show "mutual respect" (which covers a great many sins.)

. . . The real value of such meetings is to let some grievances get aired. This could not be accomplished sticking to a hypothetical case. We need to deal with the *here* and *now*. We need to look at our every day "hangups" and try to talk and exchange ideas to solve our problems together. We have too many differences to stick to any made up situation.

. . . More schools should have the opportunity to participate in these workshops.

. . . Seminars of this type are essential if relationships among teachers and students are to improve in an integrated system. Also it is necessary if administrators are to observe teachers as individuals rather than as members of a *minority* group or a *majority* group. There must be better communication and improved communication in the system.

. . . More schools in the Houston Independent School District should be involved in these types of workshops that are *not* prototype schools.

. . . As part of an integrated faculty, meetings had no changing effect on my attitude or behavior.

. . . Outsiders who magnify race issue have problems.

. . . Should have developed more applicable situations.

. . . *Prototype* should be removed and all schools treated alike.

. . . Should include Mexican-Americans instead of dwelling entirely on integration.

. . . Did so to help me better understand human nature by working with parents and children. Aided me to do "in-depth" thinking.

To imply that all of the objectives established for the Prototype Schools Project were accomplished to the satisfaction of all during this operational period would certainly be debatable. However, the accomplishments realized during this project justify optimism for a good harvest, as the Prototype Schools Project offered an opportunity for the Houston Independent School District

(1) To provide sensitivity training to more than 576 administrators, teachers, secretaries, clerks, and custodial personnel;

(2) To implement a process for integrating faculties equal to the racial identity of the community;

(3) To provide a working model to demonstrate the feasibility of a racially mixed faculty in an educational environment;

(4) To demonstrate that a greater number of teachers and administrators will remain in crossover positions when involved in special human relations and cultural awareness workshops;

(5) To select and train a cadre of crossover teachers to serve as experienced resource-consultant group leaders through the district and in future workshop activities;

(6) To establish an active program which could evolve into the most feasible, acceptable, economic, and effective means of implementing meaningful integration.

To this end the following program modifications are recommended:

a. To expand the sensitivity training workshops to include all teachers in the district;

b. To utilize the cadre of teachers trained through Title IV inservice workshops as resource-consultant group leaders in future workshop activities throughout the district;

c. To involve teachers, administrators, and other personnel in special human relation workshops so that an awareness and a willingness prevail to accept crossover teachers assigned to their predominantly Anglo-American or Negro-American faculties;

d. To eliminate the assignment to a Prototype School as a pre-requisite for receiving training in human relations workshops and assistance from the resource-consultant personnel.

e. To work in coordination with the attendance department of Houston Independent School District to maintain an awareness of the schools being affected by the movement of families and the composition of the school student body which is indicative of an area increase in integration;

f. To conduct special sensitivity and human relation workshops involving special ethnic background groups in areas which are predominantly Mexican-American, Negro-American, Oriental-American, Anglo-American, or Indian-American;

g. To utilize educational consultants to assist the curriculum department in the revision of curricula, the recommendation of resource materials, and the training of teachers to utilize these special materials through team teaching methodology;

h. To promote student participation in a program which emphasizes the philosophy of integration utilizing multi-racial classes and to aid in dissemination of this philosophy into the community via community and family visits by team teachers;

i. To re-orient the foci of the inservice training program to meet needs applicable to the Houston area by utilizing the expertise of the TEDTAC staff, local university and college consultants, and Federal agency personnel experienced in the training of personnel in human relations and behavioral changes.